THE NEWS BULLETIN
of the Near East Christian Council

Eastertide 1961

advent 1963

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Lend me your pen, will you? I don't want to forget this time . . .

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Eastertide 1961

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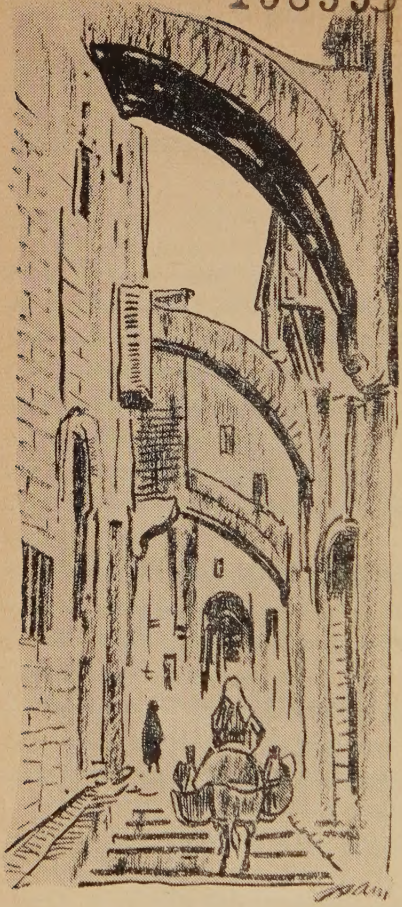
PACIFIC SCHOOL OF RELIGION

Advent 1963
108995



The Way to Calvary

Friendless and faint, with martyred steps and slow,
Faint for the flesh but for the spirit free,
Stung by the mob that came to see the show,
The Master toiled along to Calvary....

E. A. Robinson

OTTO F. A. MEINARDUS

Successor of Saint Mark

The Coptic Orthodox Church has had a wonderful and faithful history of obedience to the Lord of the Church. Dr. Meinardus, a professor of philosophy in the American University in Cairo, has shared with us previously in some of the background of the Coptic monastic movement, and in this issue, he presents a biography of the Coptic Patriarch.....

THE PRESENT Pope of Alexandria and Patriarch of the See of St. Mark, Anba Kirillus VI, is the 116th successor of the Evangelist and founder of the Egyptian or Coptic Church. Previously known as Abuna Mina al-Muttawahad al-Baramusi, he assumed the name of Kirillus, or Cyril, at the time of his enthronement on May 10th, 1959.

Five famous patriarchs with the name of Kirillus have entered the pages of the history of the Church of Alexandria. Kirillus I, the 24th Patriarch (412-444), had received his early education under Serapion at Mount Nitria, the same desert in which the present patriarch was prepared for his high ecclesiastical office. Well-known for his scholarly theological writings, Kirillus I is remembered for his twenty-nine Paschal Homilies, his books on "Worship in Spirit and in Truth", his commentary on the Pentateuch and others. To the *Corpus Iuris Canonici*, Kirillus added his twelve anathematisms directed against the Nestorians. At the third ecumenical Council of Ephesus in 431, Kirillus defended the catholic faith against Nestorianism. As church-father, theologian and patriarch, Kirillus I has entered the Martyrologia, Synaxaria and Church Histories.

Kirillus II, the 67th Patriarch (1078-1092), was elected to the patriarchal office by the monks of the Monastery of St. Macarius in the Wadi 'n-Natrun. Known for his excellent character, he had not been remarkable in his learning, though, during his time in office, he applied himself diligently to study, soon displaying great theological learning. He drew up a body of thirty-four canons which at a later date were received into the Canon Law of the Coptic Church.

In 1235, David ibn Laqlaq was consecrated Patriarch and assumed the name of Kirillus III as the 75th Patriarch. He increased the power of the patriarchate by declaring all monasteries throughout Egypt patriarchal. Anba Kirillus is remem-

Anba Kirillus IV,
110th Patriarch,
1852-1861

bered for his two series of canons which constitute part of the mediaeval Coptic Canon Law.

One of the greatest men who ever occupied the See of St. Mark was Anba Kirillus IV, the 110th Patriarch (1852-1861), known also as Cyril the Reformer. As Archbishop of Babylon (Cairo), he was elected Patriarch of Alexandria. He established schools for boys and girls, rebuilt the patriarchal cathedral in Cairo and engaged in ecumenical activities with the leaders of the Greek and Anglican communities in Egypt.

The patriarchate of Anba Kirillus V, 112th successor to the throne of St. Mark (1874-1927), saw the emergence of the Maglis Milli, the lay-council of the Copts which was organized in 1883. After a period of unrest, Kirillus laid the foundations to the establishment of a theological seminary. After a pontificate of over half a century, he died in 1927.

Anba Kirillus VI

Anba Kirillus VI was born in 1902 in Tukh an-Nassara, a small village in the Delta Province of Gharbiyah, where the desert monastery of the Romans (Dair al-Baramus) has its dependency. As a young boy, he attended the primary school at Damanhur and the secondary school at Alexandria. After his graduation, he helped his brother for a while in a Dutch firm before joining the firm of Thomas Cook and Sons in 1924.

It was during his days in Alexandria that the present patriarch began reading *The Lives of the Desert Fathers*, an experience which determined the course of his life. At the age of 25, he approached Anba Yuannis XIX, the 113th Patriarch, with the

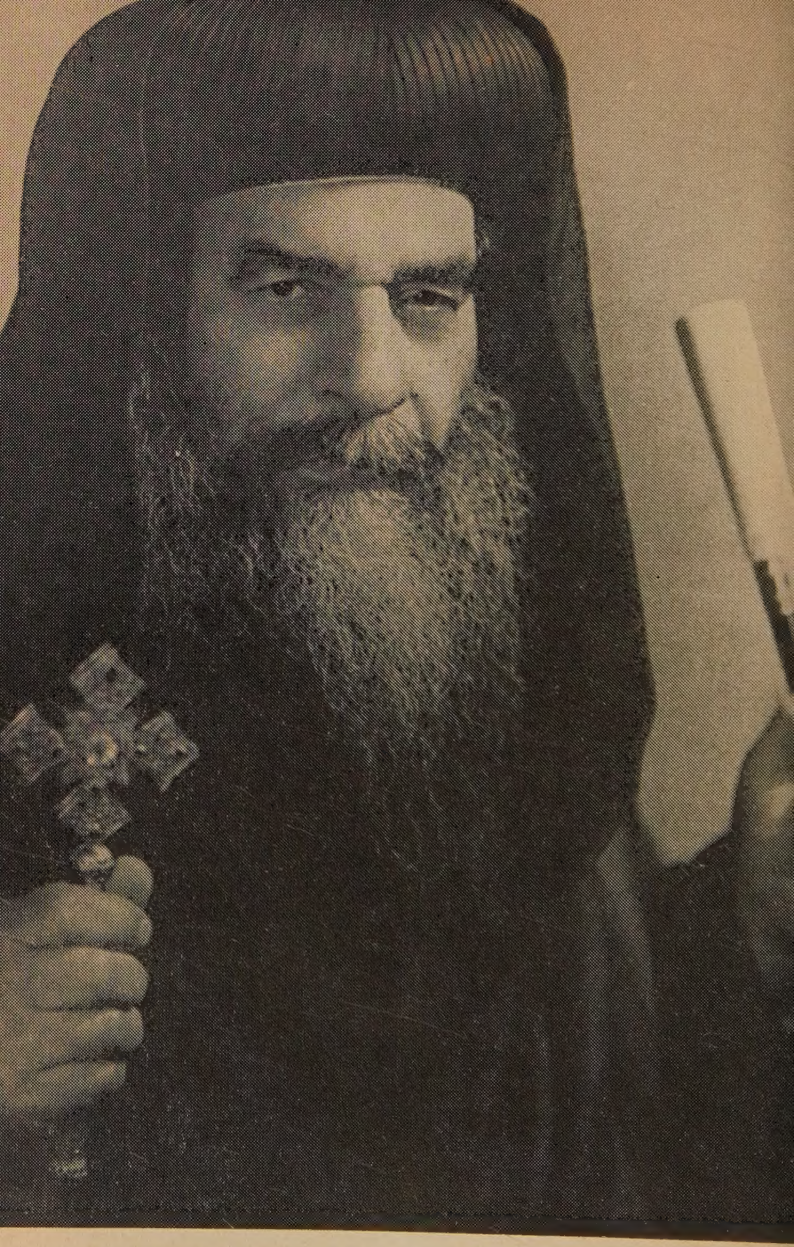
request to enter Dair al-Baramus in the Wadi 'n-Natrun, one of the four remaining monasteries in the western desert. Here, the present Patriarch became attached to the famous monk, Abuna 'Abd al-Masih al-Mas'udi who became his spiritual father. In 1931, Abuna Mina al-Muttawahad was ordained to the priesthood, and attended for two years the theological school for monks in Helwan.

Believing that he was called to the solitary life, Abuna Mina again visited the Patriarch with the request to be permitted to rehabilitate the ancient White Monastery near Sohag in Upper Egypt. But, after a short stay, he was ordered to return, and moved to a cave in the vicinity of Dair al-Baramus, where he spent his most formative years. This cave had been previously occupied by Abuna Sarabamun (Serapion), who was known for his strict ascetic practices and who had died just before Abuna Mina's arrival.

In the desert, miles away from civilization, the modern desert saint met with the prophet of the desert, Abuna 'Abd al-Masih the Ethiopian, who still inhabits his cave in the Wadi 'n-Natrun. It is difficult to ascertain the influences which the prophet might have had upon the mystic. While living in the cave, Abuna Mina visited Dair al-Baramus occasionally to obtain water and flour in order to bake his own bread. Several hours every day, Abuna Mina would spend in prayer and contemplation.

In 1936, the hermit approached the patriarch again, asking his permission to rebuild the ancient Shrine of St. Menas (Abu Mina) in the desert of Maryut. Permission was refused, and from 1936 until 1942, Abuna Mina retreated to Gabal al-

Anba Kirillus V,
112th Patriarch,
1874-1927



Anba Kirillus VI, Pope of Alexandria and Patriarch of the See of St. Mark

Guyushi, east of Old Cairo, where he inhabited one of the deserted Napoleonic windmills. The first few months he spent in building his cell and a small church. Nights he would sleep on the floor on coarse sackcloth sharing with the animals of the desert the little food which he received as gifts from pilgrims to his abode.

Prophecy and Realization

One day, Anba Yuannis XIX climbed slowly up the mountain to visit the hermit in his deserted windmill. It was a long and hard way for the aging patriarch. On his way to the anchorite, he broke his patriarchal staff, the symbol of his office. As he arrived at the abode of Abuna Mina, the hermit offered to repair the staff. But the patriarch, after having given his staff to the monk, refused to take it back, indicating that this staff would be his. Was this gesture a prophecy that his anchorite host would become his successor some twenty years later?

During the second World War, the British, believing him to be a spy, forced the desert monk to leave his solitary abode. Abuna Mina came down from the hills, and for the following years he stayed in one room in Old Cairo. It was during this time that he was appointed *hegoumenos* of the desert Monastery of St. Samuel at al-Qalamun, lying inaccessible some sixty kilometres south of the Fayum, the most isolated of all Coptic desert monasteries. Still many people sought the counsel and advice of Abuna Mina who had become a symbol of salvation for his extraordinary spiritual gifts which he had acquired in long years of contemplation and meditation.

With the humble donations and gifts which he received, he bought a piece of land upon which to build the present Church of Abu Mina. A few years later, more land was added to the original establishment and a settlement-house was built next to the church. At first, Abuna Mina trained young students to enter the monastic and solitary life. When this project was discontinued, he offered his rooms to university students from Upper Egypt who could stay there for a few piastres.

On April 19, 1959, the altar lot was cast in favour of Abuna Mina. That same Sunday morning, the hermit celebrated the Divine Liturgy in his simple church in Old Cairo. When the news of his election was communicated to his church, the servant began ringing the church-bell out of joy and enthusiasm. But the hermit stopped him, since he did not want his prayers to be interrupted. After the service his only comment was: 'God has given me a new task, which is a new test."

Immediately after his enthronement, Anba Kirillus VI devoted his attention to the eighty-year-old thorny problems regarding the relationship of the Coptic and the Ethiopian Churches. These problems, which had caused so much misunderstanding and frustration, were solved when, on June 29, 1959, the two Churches signed a joint declaration, whereby the

new patriarch-catholicos of the Ethiopian Church was given the right to consecrate Ethiopian bishops for Ethiopia, while at the same time recognizing the supremacy of the Pope of Alexandria.

A dream which the patriarch had entertained for many years was fulfilled when, on November 27, 1959, he laid the foundation stone to the ninth monastery of the Coptic Church, the monastery of St. Menas, at the historic site in the desert of Maryut. Realizing that the future of the Church depends upon the spirituality of the monks, and believing in strict monastic discipline, Anba Kirillus VI ordered all monks to return, by October 1960, to their respective monasteries to fulfil their monastic vows.

With regard to inter-church relations, Anba Kirillus VI has encouraged the ecumenical idea. His secretary, Abuna Makari, has represented the See of Alexandria at numerous committees of the World Council of Churches. The Institute of Coptic Studies in Abbassiyah is designed as a center for ecumenical studies and activities. In the near future, the Coptic Church will send Abuna Angelus, previously librarian of the Patriarchal Library, to Kuwait to minister to the many Copts who have settled there.

There is every reason to believe that Anba Kirillus VI will enter the history of the Church of Alexandria as an outstanding shepherd of his sheep.

Around the East

The *Triennial Meeting of the N.E.C.C.* will be held April 17th to 21st in Beirut, Lebanon. It will be preceded by meetings of the *Radio Project Committee* and the *Literature Committee.*

The Third Annual *Christian Medical Conference* will also be held in Beirut on May 3rd and 4th, 1961. Further information can be secured from Dr. Peter Manoogian, Medical Correspondent.

The Haskell Lectures in Oberlin, U.S.A., will be given by *the Rev. Canon A. Kenneth Cragg*, director of the Study Program of the N.E.C.C., this spring on the subject: "Time and Islam".

The Ministry of Awqaaf in Egypt, U.A.R. has decided to establish a radio station in Cairo to broadcast cultural programs to the Muslim World. It will be called "The Voice of Islam" (*Al-Ahram*).

The Rev. Hassan Dehqani-Tafti has been designated as Bishop of the Episcopal Church in Iran to succeed the Right Rev. W. J. Thompson who is retiring this spring.

The *Summer School in Jerusalem* in connection with Study Program on Islam will be held the first two weeks of July. Further information can be secured from the N.E.C.C. in Beirut, or through the Director of the Study Program.

A translation by A. KENNETH CRAGG

The Gospel of Barnabas

In this article, taken from Al Akhbar, a Cairo daily, of October 26th 1959, the eminent professor, 'Abbas Mahmud al 'Aqqad, tells the story of the Gospel of Barnabas and confirms its spurious character. For a long time this 'Gospel' has been taken as support for alleged facts which have no basis in the Christian Scriptures.

A Reader Questions:

'I READ the Gospel of Barnabas in the translation from English of Dr. Fadhil Khalil Sa'adah and I noticed that the translator had some doubts about the actual connection of St. Barnabas with the Gospel, although Rashid Ridha sought to substantiate the association of the saint with the Gospel. What is your view, sir, in the matter? If, in fact, Barnabas did not write this 'Gospel', who was its author?" (Question put by A.A., Dairut Qubla.)

Dr. 'Abbas Mahmud al-'Aqqad Answers:

Saint Barnabas was one of the seventy-two disciples (*hawariyun*) whom the Lord Christ sent out to preach and evangelize in Galilee. It was he, too, who commended the Apostle Paul to the company of the original Christians in Jerusalem, and vindicated him when they were doubtful about him. He was the maternal uncle of Mark the Evangelist, and leader of the apostolic delegation to the Greek-inhabited territory where he was received with such honour as to be mistaken for the God Jupiter come back to earth in human guise. As Acts narrates: "They lifted up their voices saying: 'The gods in human likeness have come down to us' and Barnabas they named Jupiter (Zeus), and Paul Hermas (Mercury) since he was forward to speak."

There is no doubt that Barnabas did write a gospel. Rashid Ridha remarks in his introduction: "Historical sources provide us with no mention of the Gospel of Barnabas earlier than the Index of prohibited books issued by Pope Gelasius I. The Gospel of Barnabas does appear there. Pope Gelasius' time was in the end of the fifth century A.D., that is, before the mission of Muhammad. However certain European scholars nowadays are dubious about the Index concerned, as Dr. Sa'adeh notices

in his preface, although the majority view certainly sustains its authenticity."

It is clear that, contrary to the supposition of some European scholars, with whom Dr. Sa'adeh ranks himself, this Gospel was not in fact unknown before the fifth century. There is reference to it, for example, in the writings of Origen, Clement, Eusebius, Jerome and others, who have quoted from it and referred to it. It was undoubtedly known in the second century A.D.

But the question is: Was the Gospel Barnabas wrote and which these leading Christian Fathers read in the second and third centuries actually the same text and gospel here translated into English and thence into Arabic?

One thing we can be entirely sure about is that the Gospel of Barnabas did not altogether tally with the other Gospels either in its sources or its nature, and thus it was not taken as authoritative with these Gospels into the Canon.

Furthermore, it seems evident that the Gospel translated into English has been subjected to numerous additions. It has been noted that very many of its expressions and its phraseology are of a kind unknown before the spread of Arabic in Andalusia and neighbouring areas, and that the description it contains of Hell involves much later elements, not current among Christians and Jews in the early days, A.D. We are not implying here, as has been the case in some quarters, that the description of Hell in the Gospel of Barnabas is taken from the Italian poet, Dante's *Divine Comedy*. (For the two descriptions when compared are found not to correspond.) The poet Dante himself took the picture of Hell in his story from sources familiar to him and to others, including some which can be traced to Homer and the songs of the Greeks, as well as legends from the Talmud.

It is not comparison between Dante's portrait (of Hell) and that of the Gospel of Barnabas which generates our doubt about various questionable phrases in that Gospel. What makes us dubious is the attribution of such expressions to the pen of Barnabas, because they are the sort of language which only spread into the European continent from Arabic sources. One can hardly assume blithely that the Lord Christ proclaimed His Gospel to thousands with the formula: "In the name of Muhammad, messenger of God" and this address is not found outside the pages of this Gospel.

Moreover, errors which no Jew who knows his holy books could fail to see abound in this Gospel. They are errors, too, which no Christian believing in the canonical Gospels of the western Church could be in two minds about, and which also no Muslim would be caught out by, who appreciated the degree to which they are antithetical to his own Qur'an.

Thus, it seems to us, the extraneous material was deliberately

added to the Gospel by a writer who did not want its circulation among Jews, Christians or Muslims, in order to cast suspicion upon it, and its vogue was limited to one or two sects only. This strategy was intended to forestall the possible establishment of another text of a less dubious kind, whose acceptance and validity would have been much more likely.

We do not want to say that this conjecture is the only possible one. It could be that the additions are the work of some Jew or Christian who had become a Muslim and wanted to bring the book more into line with his new-found faith, but who failed to harmonize fully the whole because of the difficulty of giving a structural unity to the whole book. Thus various incompatible and discordant elements survived in it.

Taking all conjectures into account, the conclusion, in summary form, would seem to be that the Gospel of Barnabas was a gospel known in the second Christian century but that it was not entirely consistent with the other Gospels—a fact which is not to be wondered at in the light of the contention between the saint (Barnabas) and Paul the Apostle, which had occasioned the rupture between them in missionary work. However, the Gospel of Barnabas as known to Origen, Clement, Eusebius and other Christian fathers in the second and third centuries did not include what we later find in the Gospel translated into English and Arabic under this name.

'Abbas Mahmud al-'Aqqad

Translator's comments:

The foregoing is translated from *Al-Sharq wa-l-Gharb*, Vol. 56, No. 10, December 1959, pp. 384-386. It is an interesting development, marking a careful and reserved attitude to the Gospel of Barnabas in contrast to the rather hasty and assertive assumptions often made among Muslims since its appearance in Arabic. Dr. 'Aqqad's main suggestion about the relation between the 2nd century Gospel and the mediaeval one (namely, the hypothesis of deliberate distortion to arrest its circulation) is hardly convincing. It offers no evidence why the unknown 'adapter' should want to arrest the circulation of the original Gospel, nor why he sought to forestall the appearance of a "less dubious text". But it is a grateful matter to have the pseudo-Gospel of Barnabas carefully detached from apostolic origins.

A brief statement of the history of this pseudo-Gospel may be useful here. The English text was published in 1907 by Lonsdale and Laura Ragg, from the Italian ms. in the Imperial Library in Vienna. From their English the Arabic edition was taken. The Vienna text dates from the latter part of the 16th century, though it may be a copy of an earlier text, the date of which, in strong probability, goes back to the 14th century, but not earlier.

The 'Gospel' has many verbal affinities with Dante's writings and seems emphatically to belong to the same general milieu. One particular point concerns the Jubilee, which the writer of 'Barnabas' makes to occur every hundred years. This is not Qur'anic and Old Testament jubilees are every fifty years. Pope Clement VI instituted a fifty year jubilee in 1349. Thus the last century jubilee, consistent with other date sources in Barnabas, would be 1300—a year which was also central in Dante's writing.

If, as seems very likely, the writer of 'Barnabas' was Dante's contemporary, the hypothesis that 'Aqqad mentions, of the book's being the mark of a convert to Islam seems very strong. He chose Barnabas as an apostolic pseudonym and borrowed the traditional alienation between him and St. Paul to give sharp anti-Christian views an anti-Pauline slant. But in doing so he put himself far out of the range of New Testament thought, and even, at points, of the Qur'an. He makes Barnabas one of the Twelve, to the exclusion of Thomas. He expurgates the Canonical Gospels in the interest of Muslim conformity, makes Judas explicitly the substitute victim at the Cross, and puts into the mouth of Jesus anachronistic sayings. His aim seems to be to disqualify apostolic Christianity under the veil of what was an issue between Paul and Barnabas. What is never even glimpsed is that this 'contention' between the two arose over a personal matter as to the 'guts' as a traveller of a single individual who himself later became the author of the first and most formative canonical record of the Christ Whom Paul and Barnabas undeviatingly served.

Even with the utmost goodwill and objectivity (such as the writer of this 'Barnabas' conspicuously lacked) it would be difficult for a 14th century authorship to correct or disprove the canonical Gospels. *A.K.C.*

A. WILLARD JONES

Aid to the Bedouin

The hand of refugee help and relief stretches far. You are aware of some of the extent and cost of relief work, but the Refugee Relief Secretary here explains one of the specific programs of this branch of Near East Christian Council activity.

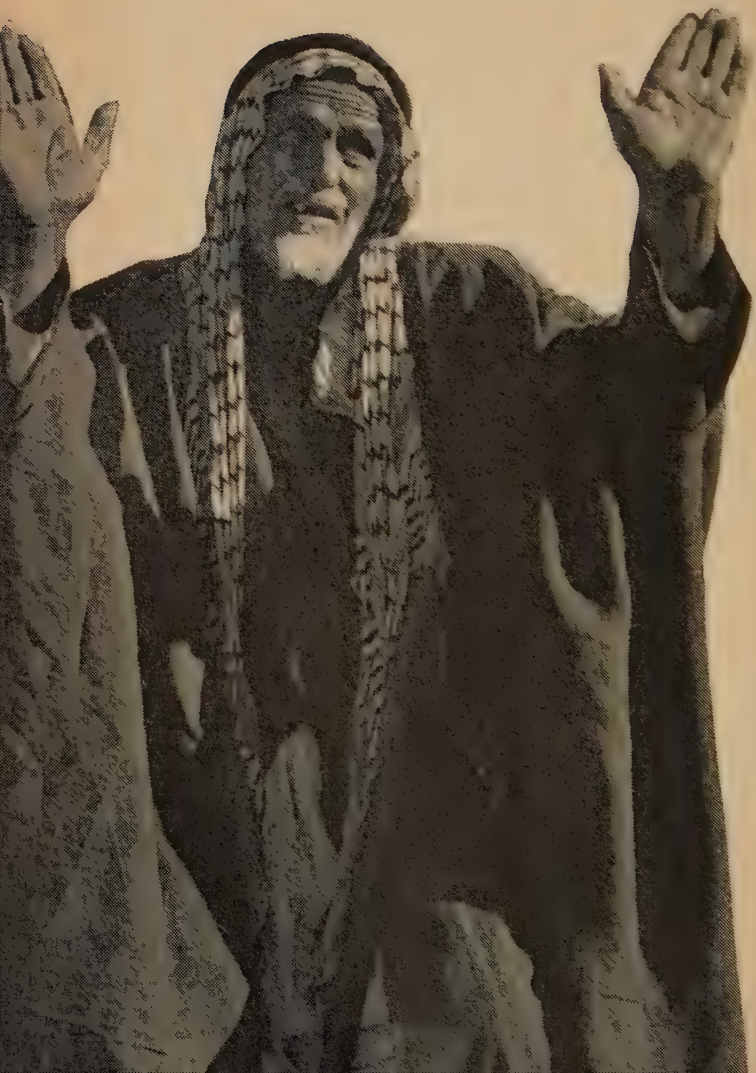
"... in the wilderness shall waters break out and streams in the desert." *Isaiah 35.6*

DURING THE PAST TWELVE YEARS, while controversy has raged over the "Palestine Problem", the plight of the Bedouin who lost extensive grazing lands in the Negev has been largely neglected. For centuries these nomadic people have been accustomed to move freely into the peninsula of Sinai on the one hand or into Jordan on the other in search of pasture for their flocks. Now that the barbed wedge of Israel cuts through this area even to the Gulf of Aqaba, the Bedouin are no longer free to make seasonal use of the small amount of forage which their desert heritage affords. Neither do they find it easy to get on the rolls of UNRWA and thus become eligible for relief. By definition, a Palestinian refugee is a person whose normal residence was in Palestine, and who lost both his home and his means of livelihood as a result of the conflict in 1948. Since a Bedouin's home is his tent and his livelihood depends upon his flocks, it is as difficult for him to fit into this definition as it is into the artificial straightjacket of his barbed-wire frontiers.

A further complicating factor is the fact that many of them were driven from Israel after 1948. On May 30, 1951, the Egyptian-Israeli Mixed Armistice Commission reported that "a number of Bedouin, estimated between 6,000 and 7,000 persons, appertaining to the Azazmeh tribe, have been expelled from the area under Israeli control and from the demilitarized zone, across the international border into Egypt". And again on October 6, 1959, the same commission condemned Israel for their punitive treatment of Bedouin in Israel whereby an estimated 354 members of the Azazmeh tribe were forced to flee from their ancestral grazing lands into the mountains of Sinai. (See NECCCRW News Items for October 16, 1959.)

When, in 1955, UNRWA sought the permission of the

Bedouin shaikh at Tuwana,
imploring the help of God and man to find water



General Assembly to offer relief to the Bedouin and "other claimants for relief", that body noted their serious need but appealed "to private organizations to give them increased assistance to the extent that local governments cannot do so" and urged "that all governments and individuals support these private organizations with food, goods and services".

The sufferings of the Bedouin have been the more acute on account of the buffetings of nature. During the winter of 1958-1959 severe blizzards blew away some of their tents and caused deaths among men and animals on account of the cold. Moreover, there have been three years of severe drought and five years of less than average rainfall so that little can be done to start a program of self-support among these people living on the fringe of the desert.

Along with other voluntary agencies, the Near East Christian Council's Committee for Refugee Work has contributed extensively to their relief.

During the spring of 1959, our Drought Relief Committee made five distributions of flour, vegetable oil, sugar and tea to the value of Jordanian Dinars 25,135.665 to 23,591 Bedouin tribesmen in the area between Madaba and Aqaba in southeast Jordan, and to 3,983 Bedouin who had moved into the Hebron and Samaria areas of West Jordan at a cost of JD 1,686.720. Our team then moved into northeast Jordan and distributed the same sorts of food to 25,073 Bedouin there at a cost of JD 16,225.267.

At that time our team leader reported: "The three past years have seen the worst crop failures in the memory of those still alive. It is a heavy burden to the government to supply drinking water alone. The numbers of miserable people are increasing and many are starving."

Before the end of 1959, the entire gift of £51,000, received from the British Council of Churches, had been used to provide food and blankets for these helpless people. The Commander of the Desert Patrol and others acquainted with the area often speak of it as the best of all relief projects for the Bedouin, and say that it saved hundreds from death by starvation.

Other gifts from the Oxford Committee for Famine Relief have been used to provide food and blankets. Church World Service sent a special shipment of vegetable oil from CROP collections in the United States and funds for the purchase of animals. Recently "War on Want" has sent a special contribution of £2,500 for constructive assistance to the Bedouin. In 1959 some fifteen families were given the strong strips of black cloth with which to renew their "houses of hair" and fifty families were given donations of three fat ewes each to help renew their flocks. But further distribution of animals is being held in abeyance until there is assurance of pasture. Thus have

Repairing walls around reservoir

"private organizations given increased assistance" to these "other claimants for relief".

Recently a new approach to this problem has been made. In the latter part of 1960, the Near East Christian Council's Committee for Refugee Work was asked to supervise the expenditure of JD 75,000 from funds generated by the sale of United States wheat in Jordan in a program of "wage relief to Bedouin and Frontier Villagers". With one third of the total amount, our Drought Relief Committee has undertaken some twenty-four projects in southeast Jordan for the utilization of water resources so that the situation may be permanently improved.

"Nomadic life in the desert is sustained by a continuation of two factors, grazing and water. A camel in the heat of summer can graze for five days without water. This means that she grazes anywhere within a circle, of which the center is her waterhole, that has a radius of thirty miles. The sheep drinks every day; the goat every second day. The radius of their grazing circle is ten miles. Logically, water without grazing in the desert is a useless commodity, as is grazing without water. Grazing is the result of natural rainfall, but water can be stored by man. In order to make the most economical use of desert grazing, the aim must be to arrange such a system of reservoirs and wells as will bring every square mile of Jordan within reach of grazing animals."

The twenty-four projects being undertaken by NECCCRW include the deepening and cleaning of wells, and the cleaning and repair of a number of ancient Roman or Nabataean reservoirs. One such reservoir at Muhai has just been completed at a cost of JD 1273. It is capable of holding 3,000 cubic meters of water, and, if rains come this year, it will be a source of clean water supply all summer, and, God willing, for years to come. Another project at Tuwana is in a valley where there was once an extensive settlement but which is now abandoned because the local wells have dried up. One old Bedouin shaikh who lives there but who has to bring water for many miles begs us to help him. With the advice of a trained geologist, the NECCCRW is clearing one of the wells and digging it deeper in the hope that water may be found at a lower level, and at least one well may be renewed.

This new program thus gives immediate wage relief to these "little ones" who have suffered so much from natural causes as well as from the hand of man, and, at the same time, it makes provision for the permanent improvement of water resources, so that when the drought is broken and pasture is available, the Bedouin may again find the severe but independent living to which he is accustomed. Then too, additional contributions in the form of sheep, goats and even camels, can be made so that they will be again entirely self-supporting.

Completed pool at Muhai

The Saving Purpose of God

MUSLIMS and Christians are both People of a Book. The Holy Qur'an is the Book of the Muslim and the Holy Bible is the Book of the Christian. You must know that there are many people about whom we read in both these Books: for instance, Adam, Abraham, Noah, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, David, Jonah.

There is one long Sura in the Holy Qur'an which is called 'Joseph'. Many of you must have read this Sura and learned much about Joseph, the son of Jacob, from it. Shall we go over some of the facts you know about Joseph from the Qur'an? Joseph was a dreamer of dreams. He had many brothers and was greatly loved by his father. (Our Holy Book tells us that his father made him a coat of many colours.) His brothers, who hated him because of his father's special love for him, decided

Sister
K. H. Culshaw

WORDS

that they would kill him. But one brother said, "Let us not kill him; let us put him in a deep pit and leave him there." They dipped Joseph's coat in the blood of an animal which they killed and when they showed the coat to their father he believed that the animal had devoured his son. Some merchants who found Joseph in the pit took him with them into Egypt and there sold him as a slave. Some time later he was sent to prison and while he was a prisoner it was discovered not only that he was a dreamer of dreams but that he could interpret the dreams of other people. When he was able to interpret the dream of Pharaoh, the King of Egypt, and said that it meant that there would be seven years of good harvest in Egypt followed by seven years of famine, Pharaoh made him the most important man in his kingdom and put him in charge of all his granaries. When famine came not only to Egypt but to the country of Joseph's father and brothers also, his father sent his sons down to Egypt for help. Joseph gave them grain and sent them home to bring their youngest brother. All this time Joseph knew who his brothers were but they did not recognize him. At last, when he did tell them who he was, they were very frightened because

they remembered their cruelty to him.

Now in the Holy Book of the Christians all these facts are also found and if we turn to the Book of Genesis, chapter 45, we see that Joseph is not angry with his brothers and does not want to punish them. Moreover in verses 3-8 we read that he says to his brothers, "And God sent me before you to preserve you a remnant in the earth and to save you alive by a great deliverance. So now it was not you that sent me hither, but God."

Whenever I read this verse I am reminded of another verse which we read in the second part of the Christians' Holy Book, which is called the New Testament. Here we read about the Lord Jesus, and how the Jews hated Him and treated Him most cruelly, and finally brought Him to be tried in the Judgment Hall by the Roman Governor, Pontius Pilate. When the Lord Jesus stood silent before the Governor, Pilate said to Him, "You will not speak to me? Do you not know that I have power

VITNESS

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to release you, and power to crucify you?" Jesus answered him, "You would have no power over me unless it had been given you from above."

So we find that the Lord Jesus is saying the same thing as Joseph in different words. He is acknowledging that God has brought Him to the place where He is. Just as Joseph knew that God had brought him to Egypt in order to save his family in time of famine, so the Lord Jesus knew that, because of His great love for all men, God had sent Him into the world to save men from their sins. He Himself was without sin yet He died on the cross for our sins and by His death and resurrection we, who believe in Him, know that we are saved from our sins and have eternal life.

We are all sinners in the sight of God—you and I. Do you want to be sure that you are saved from your sins—not only when you face the judgment, but here and now? If so, come and learn of Him who says, "Come unto me, all who labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest."

On the original occasion, in a Girls' School, when this talk was given, the closing words were sung in an Urdu version.

Books for New Literates from the N.E.C.C.

WHAT DO PEOPLE who have just entered into the portal of literacy want to read about? Or, for that matter, what do you want to read? We always look for the book that is interesting to us! And to the man for whom print is magic, who is inclined to believe everything he reads, whose mind is reaching out for impressions—the books he reads must be interesting and challenging. The Church has the opportunity of presenting to the new literate books that are filled with the "dynamite of God".

Here is a listing of some of the books prepared for the new literate, and available in Arabic through the Near East Christian Council.

Already Published

The Book of Saleh, in five volumes.
The Life of Christ, in eight volumes.
Write Your Own Letter
My Body and How It Works
The Way of the Cross
Youth Manual on Marriage
Studies in the Gospel of St. Mark

Soon to be Published

The Sermon on the Mount, by the Rev. Samuel Habib
The Message of the Bible, by the Rev. Menis Abdul Noor
My Country, by the Rev. Samuel Habib
Clean Water, by Samia Habashy
Nutrition, by Fawzia Samuel
Care of the Pregnant, by Samia Habashy
The Child in His First Year, by Samia Habashy.

These books are available through the Literature Department of the Near East Christian Council, or through your local bookseller.

SAMUEL HABIB

Learning to Read

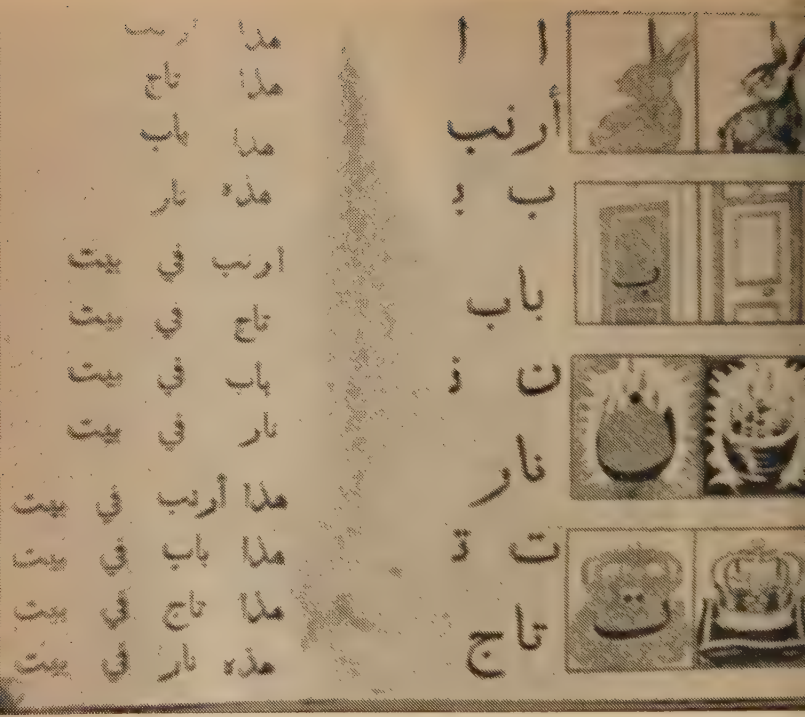
A Project in Literacy

ONE OF THE GREAT crusades of this era is the crusade to eradicate illiteracy. It is a crusade that has affected three fifths of the world's population, for the majority of mankind, until the past decade, has been left without the skill of reading and writing.

"One hundred million more adults read today than twenty years ago," states Dr. Frank Laubach, who more than any other man is responsible for the spread of this enthusiasm from one part of the world to the next. In Egypt, the Literacy Program has been a key emphasis of the work of the Church, and within this issue of *The News Bulletin*, we present a picture story of how Amgad, a *fellah* from the Upper Nile, learned to read.

The literacy project requires leaders, those who are able to present the technique of learning to others; it requires volunteers, who are prepared to help teach others; it requires foresight to provide these new readers with the right kind of reading material. Through the labours of the Coptic Evangelical Church, the start has been made. Amgad is learning to read!! . . .

Below: Kamal is a village volunteer teacher. He is learning from one of the project directors how to teach the first Primer lesson on a chart. He is willing to teach an illiterate neighbour, named Amgad.



Above: This is a chart which shows the first lesson of the Primer. The illiterate begins by reading four words, four letters of the Arabic alphabet, and twelve complete sentences in the first lesson. The words are: (1) *'arnib*, rabbit; (2) *baab*, door; (3) *naar*, fire; and (4) *taaj*, crown. Each word is illustrated, and the key letter is to be found in the illustration as well. The illiterate is taught that the *alif* is the ear of the rabbit. Since the Arabic word, rabbit, begins with an *alif*, this can be easily memorized.

The Primer, *Al-Murshid*, consists of fifty-one pages of these word-pictures. It can be completed usually by the illiterate within one month.

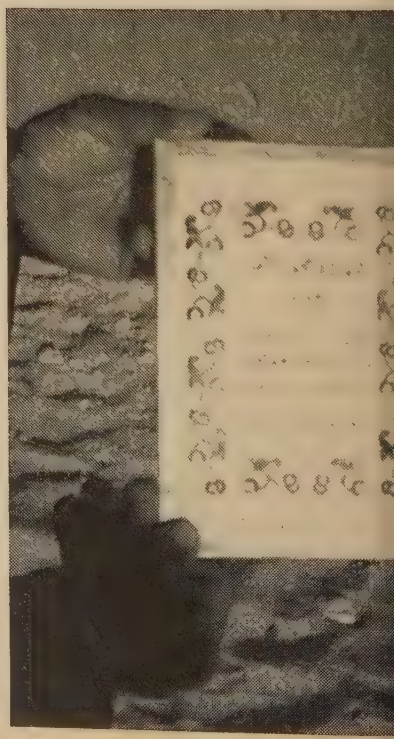
Above: Kamal started to teach Amgad the first lesson on the same chart.

Below: Amgad now can read in his book. Kamal helps him. The supervisor still wants to be sure that Kamal teaches the right method.

Amgad continues to read. He likes to read wherever he is, even standing at the street corner. He is full of a new self-confidence, for now new doors are continually opening to him through books. Reading has become his major interest.

Four months of study and learning have produced this certificate of literacy which he proudly holds in his hands. Four months spent in reading *The Life of Salih*, a man like him who has learned to read and write, and *The Life of Christ*, simple literacy project booklets, prepared by Dr. Frank C. Laubach. And culminating with reading the more than seventy booklets, written with limited vocabulary, on such subjects as the Cross, the Care of Chickens, and How to Write Your Own Letter.

Amgad is a man with a new vision. He is now literate.



KEY BOOKS

Key Books have been acclaimed as the books vital to missionary work. Short, simply written and well-produced, they present the Christian doctrine and the message of the Gospel in relation to today's problems. Recognizable from their distinct cover design and priced at only 2s per copy, they can be obtained through bookshops or direct from the publishers at 4 Bouverie Street, London, E.C.4.

1 **Scientists Look at the Bible** *R. L. F. Boyd and others*

2 **Letters to a Friend on Living the Christian Life (1)** *Jim Sutton*

3 **Letters to a Friend on Living the Christian Life (2)** *Jim Sutton*

4 **God and Man** *Merfyn M. Temple*

5 **Explaining the Gospel to Muslims** *John Crossley*

6 **"When You Pray . . . ."** *Mary Senior*

7 **Background to the New Testament** *J. R. Shaw*

8 **A Guide for Living** *John Poulton*

READY MAY

9 **Victorious Faith - Martyrs Down Through the Ages** *John Stephens*

10 **How to Understand the Old Testament** *Frank Michaeli*

UNITED SOCIETY FOR CHRISTIAN LITERATURE

4 Bouverie Street, London, E.C.4.

An Interview With The Shaikh of Al-Azhar

(translation of an article published under the same title in *Al-Ahram* on the 2nd of January 1961).

THE SHAIKH SAID: "The Muslim Message of al-Azhar does not stop at certain boundaries . . . Campaigns of the Azhar people will go out to all countries to promulgate Islam and to meet the attacks of its enemies. We employ foreign languages in preaching and in contesting with the imperialistic missionaries in Africa. During this week missions from al-Azhar will fly to Britain, America and Germany to specialize in foreign languages, psychology and sociology. These missions will return after a year to start an evangelistic campaign for Islam.

"There are at present in al-Azhar three thousand students from fifty-four different nationalities from all over the world. Many countries in Africa have begun to send their students to learn Islam. Last month thirteen students arrived from Nigeria, three from Sierre Leone, twenty-nine from Ghana, twenty-four from the French Sudan, eight from the Ivory Coast, and seven from Senegal, all to continue their studies."

The Shaikh said: "There is at present in al-Azhar a comprehensive revival in all its activities and curricula, as we are a part of a progressive nation. Al-Azhar, in relation to the Muslim world, is its hope for the future, the defender of Islam, the protector of its beliefs, and the source of radiation of learning and knowledge . . . We do not admit any passivity, but we are active in removing all obstacles that stand between people and Islam with its generous principles. We shall remove those who block our way, so that people may come forward to Islam in huge numbers.

"Al-Azhar tries to keep pace with the present age. For this reason, it has sent missions to Europe and America. Many of these graduates have already occupied high posts in the cultural centres. Such missions will be continued in the future, in order to provide our men with the Islamic and Western cultures at one and the same time, and to help them to carry the message of al-Azhar at its best.

"Lately we have decided to send four *ulema* to specialize in sociology, philosophy, English language, education, and psychology. All these efforts tend naturally to push forward the modern revival of our great university."

WILLIAM N. WYSHAM

Are You Literature-Minded?

There are books in the presses and books at the bookshops, but how do they get into the hands of readers? This is a problem here in the Near East, and to it, William N. Wysham, formerly associated with Lit-Lit and the Presbyterian Commission in the U.S.A., with a background of missionary service in Iran, has addressed himself. Here is one suggestion from him on this question.....

AGAIN AND AGAIN, in my study of Christian literature in the Near East during this year, I have come back to the individual Christian as the key to the problem of distribution. I suppose that it will be mainly such individual Christians who will read this article. To you I put this question: Are you literature-minded? If enough of you are, the problem of adequate distribution of the Christian books and pamphlets we publish and import into the Near East will solve itself.

It is extraordinary how many evangelists and church workers fail to make effective use of the printed page in their work. Some even seem to have a prejudice against it. There was a missionary in the Near East some years ago who was superbly equipped for his task. He could speak the vernacular fluently and preach in it so eloquently that he was the envy of his colleagues. He had a wide circle of friends and was indefatigable in making new contacts. But he was allergic to Christian literature, except for certain Bible portions.

Over many years his opportunities for multiplying himself and his message were severely limited, because he was not literature-minded. He used to say jokingly that, if he made an untactful statement in a sermon, the chances were slim that he would get into trouble, but if he circulated something in black and white, it could be used as evidence against him. But, by the same token, he often missed the chance to drive home the effect of one human voice with a supplementary Christian message in permanent form.

Perhaps the most literature-minded Christian I have known

was Samuel M. Zwemer. Aside from his unique contribution on the production side, he was a walking Christian bookshop. Whether I ran into him in Cairo, Teheran or New York, he never failed to pull a pamphlet or book out of his pocket and either recommend it or present it to me—always with enthusiasm. I know that any of you who knew him will say that he met you in the same way. He had formed the habit of leaving behind something in written form after every contact.

No Christian work can fail to be strengthened by the thoughtful and assiduous use of Christian literature. For one who teaches the Bible, which particularly needs explanation to those unfamiliar with it, a stock of tried-and-true literature to answer common questions and resolve doubts is a tremendous asset. For a pastor, there is a wide range of material from which to choose.

Once I asked a pastor what use he made of Christian literature. He said that annually he had "Literature Sunday" in his church, calling attention to new Christian books. I asked him if he used it in his pastoral visiting and other individual contacts. It had never occurred to him that he might brighten a sick person's day with something to read, comfort the bereaved, strengthen the tempted, fire the young with high ideals, send a newly married couple into their new life with wise counsel—all through hand-picked books and pamphlets now available in Arabic or the other languages of the Near East.

To be literature-minded means that a Christian worker must know his literature if he is to use it well. I suspect that many in the Near East have themselves read few of the books and pamphlets now in print in Arabic or Turkish or Persian. Some do not even keep copies of the latest catalogue at hand. It is helpful, not only to have read or to know the content of every type of material available, but to annotate one's catalogue and to have available one's favorite books in order to meet needs which arise again and again. A little shelf of these will soon be worn out and need replacement when we have formed the habit of loaning to patients, pupils and parishioners, to friends and even chance acquaintances, books which have helped us and can convey new truth to them. After thirty years, I can still recall vividly the smile on his face and the thrill in his voice when Dr. Schaffter of the C.M.S. Hospital in Isfahan urged me to read certain books which he loved. There was an inevitable result—I read them!!

Those of us responsible for the literature program must do more to help busy people—doctors, teachers, pastors, church laymen and women—use our books and pamphlets effectively. We must do more by way of reviews of new publications and renewed publicizing of proven old ones. It will be worth the expense to fill out some of our catalogues with a brief descrip-

tion of a book's contents and something as to its best use. I recall that, because we had this type of a catalogue of Persian literature years ago, workers in a new mission did effective evangelistic work through a bookshop while they were beginning to learn the language. The English side of the catalogue was their guide to fit the right book to the expressed or suspected need of the enquirer.

There is room for only a word here as to the importance of those of us who are literature-minded sharing with each other the titles of books and pamphlets in the English language which we have found effective, particularly with students. Much Christian literature in English does not suit the Near East, and when we find a piece that does, it is invaluable. We should be able to glean a goodly number of these which will do much to strengthen our vernacular list and can be made available to the rapidly growing number of those who read English well. By such cooperation among the literature-minded, the very best material for translation can also be discovered and tested.

In this brief article, it is not possible to discuss the broad and vital question of how literature-minded Christians can promote the sale of books and pamphlets. In fact, I may seem to be advocating only a "give-away" program. I certainly do not favour any method involving indiscriminate free distribution of material, but the presentation of a single piece from "friend to friend", with due emphasis on its importance, can not only avoid any danger of "literature pauperization" but lead to the purchase of other material.

Dr. Zwemer once provided me with an unforgettable experience of what it means to be literature-minded and how to use it with zeal, imagination and tact. He was showing me Cairo, and, in particular, the al-Azhar University. We went into one of the many small shops nearby, which both printed and sold Arabic Muslim literature. Dr. Zwemer fell into conversation with one of the two proprietors—the other continued to turn a rotary press in the dim background. Zwemer led the conversation into Christian channels and inevitably pulled two tracts from his pocket, bearing on his point. He asked them to read these, but they demurred.

"I must watch the shop and my partner must work the press," said the man out front.

"I'll make a deal with you," said Zwemer. "Both of you sit here and read these two pamphlets and I'll turn your press until you finish, so no time will be wasted."

This sporting proposition rang the bell. The two Muslims read Christian literature while Dr. Zwemer, with a roguish grin, rolled out the sheets of a Muslim pamphlet. May his tribe increase among those who proclaim the Gospel in the Near East!!

RECENT PUBLICATIONS FROM THE LITERATURE DEPARTMENT OF THE N.E.C.C.

Downfall of Jerusalem *by G. D. Karling*

A sequel to *Barabbas*, published last year. At present our novel list includes *The Silver Chalice*, *The Robe*, *Quo Vadis*, *Ben Hur* and other smaller novels and stories, all in Arabic.

Youth Seeks A Master *by Louis Evans*

This is a presentation of Christ to young men as the Master of reason, property, body, service and heart.

The Song of the Child *Short Stories for Children*

Fourteen short stories for children. Our catalogue contains some thirty-six books and stories for the young, many of them illustrated.

As He Passed *by Lilian Hais*

An adaptation of some imaginative scenes of the events in the life of our Lord.

These books in Arabic are all available from your bookseller or from NECC Literature
36 Sh. Gala', Cairo.

The Voice of the Gospel -and You

SOMEONE ASKED ME the other day how many billion people live on this earth. I didn't really know, but I made some answer about the population increasing daily by over 120,000, or more than 43,000,000 a year.

"And yet," he said, "our Lord commanded us to go and make disciples of all peoples . . . How is it possible for a few to reach out and teach the world?"

It was really quite evident that my friend hadn't heard about *The Voice of the Gospel.* Not that it will reach all over the world, but it will reach all over the Near East! That is, the new radio station to be opened in 1962, broadcasting in the languages of the Near East the Good News of God in Christ. Surely this *Voice* has come to the Kingdom of God for just such a time as this, when populations explode and we feel rather futile, and yet the need for the Love of God and His Peace is greater than ever before!

It all sounds like it's a long way off, but the time to begin thinking and working for this radio station is *now*! And the place where it starts is with *you*! Radio is a vehicle, a means, of reaching into communication with listeners in many varied locations. The kind of communication that develops, and the success of that communication, depends upon the interest and vitality of the message—and the new relationships that are born because of it. So *now* is the beginning, *our* beginning!

Planning for this project has two aspects. One is the production of the program, and the other is the preparation of the listener. Now production isn't merely the technical studio work of grinding out a fifteen-minute program. It's the presentation of the Gospel of God in the language and thought forms of the people for whom it is intended; it is communicating in the best possible way, speaking from Christian hearts to brothers round about us of what God is doing in this world.

And the preparation of the listener has to deal with *what* we produce and *how* we'll produce it. This is promotion—putting the station in front of people—and progression—keeping pace with their needs and desires and hopes.

This is where we can start right now. Share your ideas on the kind of program you expect—and want—to hear from a Christian radio station. And what about your neighbours? What times do people listen? And what would make a person stop his "dial-twiddling" to listen, or spend the extra few seconds to tune for the station? It's a simple beginning, but we can all do it right now, so that when we hear the call letters for THE VOICE OF THE GOSPEL, people will *listen* to the Good News of God in Christ.

Notes and Comments on Recent Books of Near East Interest

***The Copts in Jerusalem*, by Otto F. A. Meinardus. Published by the Commission of Oecumenical Affairs of the See of Alexandria. Cairo, 1960, 98 pp.**

THE NAME of the publishers of this book is itself a significant piece of news; that the See of Alexandria has a Commission on Oecumenical Affairs is very important. The publishers and the author are to be congratulated on an excellent production with fine illustrations, good printing and good paper.

This is an extremely well-written account, the first book in English for many years on the history of one of the ancient churches in Jerusalem. The Coptic Church in Jerusalem was until recent years the only Coptic Church outside Africa. It has existed for many centuries, mainly in order to serve the spiritual needs of Coptic pilgrims coming to the Holy Places.

Between the 9th century and the 13th century, and perhaps to some extent both earlier and later, the Syrians, Egyptians and Ethiopians, who regarded themselves and one another as the true "Orthodox" and were regarded by the Byzantines and by the west as "Jacobites", appeared in Jerusalem as one church. In the 13th century, the Alexandrians, the Copts or Egyptians and the Ethiopians began to have a church in Jerusalem distinct from that of the Syrians holding the same doctrinal position. At a much later period, which is not easy to determine, the Egyptians or Copts and the Abyssinians or Ethiopians began to appear in Jerusalem as two distinct monastic communities. This story is told by Professor Meinardus mainly from the Egyptian standpoint.

I would point out that visitors from Europe at many periods refer to "Jacobites", "Copts", "Ethiopians", "Nubians", and "Indians" in ways which make many suspect that all these terms overlap and that the same people are called by two or more of these names. I would also point out that on page 21 there is evidently a confusion between two buildings called "Of S. Mary Magdalen", i.e. (1) the Church between Herod's Gate and the Antonia area, of which the site is now a Muslim orphanage, and which was "Jacobite" between the 9th century and the 13th century, and (2) the chapel near the bell-tower of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, which was never, as far as I know, "Jacobite" or "Coptic" and which is now Greek Orthodox. Neither building is to be confused with the Latin chapel of S. Mary Magdelene, within the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in the north transept.

The book is a very competent exposition, from one particular point of view, of the complicated story of the *status quo* in the Holy Places.

E. Every, Jerusalem

WINTER in the Holy City is quite different from anything known to those who have visited Jerusalem only in summer vacations. The dark rain clouds, pregnant with blessing for the fields and terraces of Ramah and Gibeon and Shiloh, hang low over the hill country of Judea. The tender green of the new grass spreads softly between the rocks on the hillside, and the little streams run down the open valleys after every storm. In the narrow streets of the Old City the contrasts of light and shadow are always great, but even greater now; for the shafts of brilliant sunlight strike down now and then between the clouds, and alternate with the periods of lowering gloom.

The season of the eastern Christmases in Jerusalem this year was a season of blessings spiritual and meteorological. After a long drought, the reservoirs were at last filled to overflowing. In the region of Kerak, where our Refugee Committee has been

supervising the repair of ancient Roman cisterns, the rains were a blessed fulfilment and a filling full.

I was privileged to see in Jerusalem another fulfilment at this Christmas time—the joyous reunion of families from both sides of the boundary, who, after years of separation in many cases, were availing themselves of the special permission to come across at the feast. Folks had come from as far away as Baghdad in order to be present at the Mandelbaum Gate for that time of joy.

In the summer Jerusalem will probably be again the meeting place for those who can attend Dr. Cragg's Summer School of the Study Program on Islam. Final plans will soon be announced, in all probability not only for Jerusalem but elsewhere too. We shall be eager to use Dr. Cragg to the full after his absence from the Near East all these months.

Now we are looking forward with great expectation to the Triennial Meeting of the Council in Beirut from April 17th to 21st. The delegates, representing fourteen countries of Europe, Asia and Africa, will come to spend four days together in Christian fellowship and consultation. In this year of our Lord 1961, as we look toward the great Assemblies in New Delhi in November, and the integration of the International Missionary Council and the World Council of Churches which is expected to take place at that time, we shall be freshly challenged to make effective the essential relationship between the unity of Christ's Church and the call to mission. We have learned that Christian unity cannot be expressed in a static condition, but rather in that effervescence of yeasty activity by which the Holy Spirit makes known His Presence. It was seen in that early church growing up in Antioch, when men were first called

Repairing a cistern near Kerak

Christians. Founded apparently by Cypriots and Africans along with men of Asia, that church seemed to feel a compelling unity in their Lord, Jesus Christ, which in turn drove them to send out such men as Barnabas and Paul to carry their glad new gospel into Asia Minor and into Europe. So, in these same lands, Greeks and Africans and Asians, we must feel once more that same impelling power granted through the Holy Spirit for mission in unity and for unity in mission.

At the Triennial Meeting there will be present friends of the Council from England and Switzerland and the United States, in addition to our own delegates from the Near East. The Rev. James A. Lovejoy, Secretary of the Near and Middle East Committee of the British Conference of Missionary Societies, will be with us, and also Miss Mabel Warburton, for so many years the mainstay of the Council in literature work, and now long in retirement. Mr. Walter Kilpatrick, Director of the Service to Refugees of the World Council of Churches, will be at the meeting, and we hope several others from the World Council, of whose plans we have not finally heard. We pray that it will be a time of refreshment and of stimulation by the Holy Spirit.

Beirut, Lebanon January 1961

Last Page Tottings . .

THE WORD for magazine in Arabic is feminine, and the *News Bulletin*, like others of her gender, has demanded—and received—a new dress! In time for Easter, too! Our thanks to all of you who have encouraged our decision by notes of appreciation—as well as thanks to the new *couturière*, Drukkerij Holland N.V.—and (never to be forgotten!) our thanks to you who faithfully send in appreciation in cash and coin. Your support has made this possible—in anticipation, of course! And now, like any female, we wait for comment on our new attire . . .

A new feature is in the field of new books. We never could keep up with reviewing all the meaningful books published, so we have requested key publishing houses to insert advertisements, drawing your attention to their recent significant publications. The best way in which to show your appreciation of this is by ordering their publications, mentioning the *News Bulletin* of course . . .

All the things that make us beautiful are the result of the combined efforts of photographers and artists, chief among whom are the Rev. Dick Ashton of St. Paul's Church, Kuwait, who offers us the cover, and Dani Dunuk-Aguila of the Philippines, who shared in the inspiration of a Jerusalem Summer School under Dr. Cragg last year . . .

But, "we commend not ourselves", as the apostle said. Yet we pray that this *News Bulletin*, containing some of the activities of Christ's men here in the Near East, may be truly the bulletin of God's Good News, broadcast and lived out by His men in the power and fellowship of the community of faith here in the Near East . . .

Pax and God Guide

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The Near East Christian Council

is an organization composed of regional Christian councils, churches and missionary societies, seeking to make effective cooperation and witness of the churches in an area extending from Morocco and Algeria to Iran and Arabia, from Turkey to the Sudan and Ethiopia.

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